

REMARKS

Claims 1-13 are currently pending. Claim 1 has been amended and claims 8-9 and 13 have been withdrawn from consideration.

Election/Restrictions

Applicants affirm the provisional election of Group 1, claims 1-7 and 10-12. Claims 8-9 and 13 have been withdrawn from consideration.

Claim Objections

Claim 1 has been amended to correct a typographical error. As suggested by the Examiner claim 1 has been amended to change "floorare" to "floorboards are." There is no change in claim scope. Entry of this amendment is respectfully requested.

Claim 7 has been objected to under 37 C.F.R. § 1.75(c) as allegedly being of improper dependent form for failing to further limit the subject matter of the previous claim. Claim 1 recites "wherein the surface layer **comprises** flexible resilient fibers." Claim 7 recites "wherein the surface layer **consists of** flexible resilient fibers." The change from comprises to consists of is a further limitation of the subject matter. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to withdraw the objection to claim 7.

Art Rejections - §102(b) Dahlberg

Claims 1-2, 5-7 and 10-12 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being unpatentable over Dahlberg (USPN 3,120,083). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

Dahlberg does not teach or suggest each feature of the presently claimed invention, as set forth in representative claim 1. For example, Dahlberg does not teach or suggest floorboards that have along their edge portions have pairs of opposing connectors for locking similar, adjoining floorboards to each other **both vertically and horizontally**.

Instead, Dahlberg only teach a system that locks adjoining floorboards to each other vertically. There is no horizontal connection disclosed or suggested. Specifically, Dahlberg teaches that the "base has interlocking configurations in the

form of undulations extending along its side edges which are shaped to engage with corresponding configurations along the side edges of adjoining tiles." Column 2, lines 51-55. As shown in Figure 3 of Dahlberg, there are only connection elements 17 and 18 to vertically connect the tiles. There are no horizontal locking elements.

The Examiner is requested to review Figs. 3a, 3b and 3c of the present application for edge portions that have pairs of opposing connectors for locking similar, adjoining floorboards to each other both vertically and horizontally.

Quite clearly Dahlberg does not teach or suggest the presently claimed invention. Dahlberg does not teach or suggest floorboards that have along their edge portions have pairs of opposing connectors for locking similar, adjoining floorboards to each other ***both vertically and horizontally***.

Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 1-2, 5-7 and 10-12 as being anticipated by Dahlberg, be withdrawn.

Art Rejections - § 103(a) Dahlberg

Claims 3 and 4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Dahlberg (USPN 3,120,083). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

As stated above, Dahlberg does not teach or suggest floorboards that have along their edge portions have pairs of opposing connectors for locking similar, adjoining floorboards to each other ***both vertically and horizontally***.

Accordingly, applicants respectfully request that the rejection of claims 3 and 4 as being unpatentable over Dahlberg be withdrawn.

Conclusion

Favorable examination and further action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited. If there are any questions concerning this paper or the application in general, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

BUCHANAN INGERSOLL & ROONEY PC

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By:

SD. Boone

Travis D. Boone

Registration No. 52,635

P.O. Box 1404
Alexandria, VA 22313-1404
703 836 6620